

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE NORWEGIAN TEACHER

To understand the social status of the Norwegian teacher, says Gabriel E. Loftfield in his study of "Secondary Education in Norway" (Bulletin, 1930, No. 17, U. S. Bureau of Education), one must understand, in part at least, the Norwegian philosophy of education. In this philosophy the teacher of both primary and secondary education is not only an employee, hired by the board of education to perform a certain work by the month or by the year, but he is also a State or communal official who, by reason of superior training, education, and experience, sustains a peculiar relationship to both community and State. In this relationship he is considered not only an expert in his line, but a wise and able man whose advice and co-operation are sought in many civic and social functions. Frequently a teacher is *herredsforsker* (chairman of the county or city board of administration), or is director of a local bank or on various committees and boards of public affairs. He may engage in partisan political activities and may even become a candidate for and be elected to a seat in the *Storting*. In his absence in such case a substitute serves in the school. He enjoys freedom of speech and freedom to discuss political matters and questions of popular interest without in the least endangering his position.

A teacher whose talent and personality single him out as a leader is easily promoted to better positions and elected to membership on the local school board, which is not legally constituted without at least one member who is a teacher in active service. This representation of the professional staff on the administrative board is based in Norway on two principles:

(1) Teachers have studied questions of education and the needs of the schools in a scientific way and from a professional point

of view. Their counsel is needed on questions of pedagogics and on the internal operation of the schools.¹

(2) Teachers as a class or social order are so vitally interested in the management of the schools and of the whole system of education that they should be represented on the school boards so that their interests may be guarded at all times.

By this same philosophy it is inferred that the teachers, being entrusted with the training of the young, shall enjoy freedom of action outside of the schoolroom, and shall have such compensation and social rewards as will make them in a large measure economically independent. Otherwise their position would not correspond to their charge. It is expected that they will be endowed with social privileges, prestige, and emoluments commensurate with their great responsibilities.

Because of this social prestige and freedom of expression, the Norwegian teachers as a class have furnished a larger quota of leaders and distinguished men and women than any other class of people in Norway. Many of the prominent lawmakers served at some time as teachers in country or village schools. Many of the ministers and bishops in the State church were teachers in their younger days. Cabinet members, ministers of state, and several of the premiers of Norway have come up from the ranks of the pedagogues. The teacher is an active and important factor in the entire social and political order of the country.

A fundamental reason for the high social standing of the Norwegian teacher is his life tenure of position. He considers such tenure to be a matter of course, since he is educated and trained for a specific purpose largely at the expense of the State. Before being given a permanent appointment he

¹Since Norway has no professional school superintendent to act as administrative officer for, and professional adviser to, the board, this counsel must necessarily come from the teachers.

must serve a probationary period, usually two years, in which he must prove that he is efficient, or drop out of the work entirely. When he has finished his professional training and his period of probation he becomes a permanent State or communal official with all the rights of such. He may be transferred to other schools within the jurisdiction of his school board, but his salary cannot be diminished. He may seek and obtain other positions in other towns or districts and may be removed for statutory causes such as immoral conduct. When he reaches the age of seventy he must resign. He then receives a pension commensurate with his salary and position.²

MORE WORK, LESS PAY

The survey of the 52 land-grant colleges of the United States includes a study of the staff and faculty members of these institutions, 12,032 individual records having been obtained. Data on salaries paid the different ranks working on both a 9-month and an 11-month basis were obtained. One of the significant facts developed was that the faculty members employed for 11 months received less salary than those working nine months out of the year. The median salary of the deans working nine months in 51 of the colleges was \$5,193, as compared with \$5,071 for the deans working 11 months. A similar situation was found in the case of the professors, the median for those employed for nine months being \$4,278, and for those working on an 11-month basis being \$4,161.

Associate professors working only nine

months were paid a median of \$3,342, in contrast to a median of \$3,207 for associate professors on duty for 11 months. In the case of the lower ranks of the teaching staffs, slightly higher salaries were received by the assistant professors and instructors working for 11 months than those employed only nine months. Of the professional training of the staff members as shown by earned degrees, it was revealed in the report that 18 per cent held doctor's degrees, 34 per cent master's degrees as their highest, 37 per cent bachelor's degrees only, and 4 per cent have no degrees, while 7 per cent did not signify what degrees they held, if any.

VICTIMIZING THE "SOUTH-PAWS"

"Difficulty in speech and stammering, in particular, may develop when a left-handed child is forced into right-handedness. Reading and writing difficulties are manifest in the reversal of letters, or syllables, and in extreme cases in writing there is an actual reversal of script as in mirror writing.

"It takes such children, who have been 'corrected,' a longer time to grasp and express ideas, and in many instances I have observed a lowered capacity for imaginative work and creation. Also, one often finds peculiarities in behavior which do not seem understandable until one appreciates the fact that the child's irritability, fatiguability, and perverse reactions may be due to a misuse of his brain and nervous system with consequent efforts at readjustment on the part of the victimized child."

—DR. IRA S. WILE.

²The State pension system of Norway is on the mutual plan and includes all State officials and functionaries. The State administers the funds and supplies any deficiency. During the time of service each teacher pays into the pension fund not to exceed ten per cent of his salary and receives upon retirement a yearly pension equal to about two-thirds of his salary. A widow receives pension in half the amount her husband has or would have received.

We don't wait for a child to have a toothache before we take him to a dentist, observes *The Parents' Magazine*, but almost every parent waits until his child is in a dilemma before he tells him about sex.